

AF Palace Acquire Program (PAQ) Handbook for Interns and Supervisors

LEGAL TENDER
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Overview

Purpose

This handbook serves as a guide for Air Force (AF) Financial Management (FM) career field Palace Acquire (PAQ) interns and supervisors to successfully navigate the intern program. The program is designed to build a foundation of FM education and training while giving interns a sampling of functional opportunities. Preparing them for future FM positions will set them up for success!

Background

This handbook was developed as a reference tool for both interns and supervisors. It can be used to guide an intern's development and to clarify a supervisor's roles, duties, and responsibilities. It is intended to be used throughout the intern development period and may be particularly useful during feedback sessions.



What is the PAQ Intern Program?

The PAQ FM Intern Program is a civilian employment program funded by Headquarters Air Force. It is administered by the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC), located at Randolph Air Force Base, TX. The intern program was established to hire entry level financial managers and prepare them, through training and rotational assignments, for permanent positions in the AF FM career field. The PAQ Program managers or administrators who are responsible for the FM PAQ Program may be reached at AFPC/DPIBI, 550 C Street West, Suite 57, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4759. Phone numbers: DSN 665-2595 or (210) 565-2595 and email address: AFPC.FM.CFT@us.af.mil.

As an Air Force employee, you are required to comply with prescribed standards of conduct in all official matters. You are expected to maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. You may not engage in a private business that would result in a conflict of interest, or even the appearance of a conflict, between that private business and the United States, the Air Force, or your job. Your actions will reflect directly on the image of the Air Force and the PAQ Program.

Upon meeting admission requirements for the FM PAQ Program, interns are placed in a three year PAQ internship/training program, which includes Professional Military Education, specialized functional training, and rotational assignments.

There is a formal training plan designed to let you experience both personal and professional growth while dealing effectively and ethically with change, complexity, and problem solving. During your internship you will receive promotions and yearly salary increases based upon your successful performance and supervisor's approval. Upon completion of your formal training, you will be offered a permanent position at the current duty location or within the servicing Major Command (MAJCOM), making it a great opportunity to begin a successful civilian career with the Air Force Civilian Service (AFCS).

Overview *cont.*

PAQ Intern Eligibility Requirements

Key Requirements:

U.S. Citizenship, Security Clearance, and Mobility Agreement (The Mobility Agreement is a signed document stating that an employee is aware of and agrees with the condition that a position may require relocation at a later date.)

Qualification Requirements:

To qualify for the PAQ intern positions, individuals must be pursuing a four-year college degree and be in their last year of completing degree requirements, or they must have already completed their four-year degree.

In addition to basic degree requirements, one of the following conditions has to be met:

- GPA of 2.95 (or better) overall or in last two years
- GPA of 3.45 (or better) in major or in last two years
- Class ranking in upper 1/3 of graduating class in the college, university, or major subdivision (i.e., School of Business; class rank letter must be signed by Registrar or Dean)
- Membership in a National Scholastic Honor Society (excluding freshman year)
- One full year of graduate level study
- Possess a master's degree or higher (e.g., LL.B., J.D., LL.M., Ph.D.) in a field that provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to do the work
- An equivalent combination of graduate education as described above and specialized experience which, when combined, would equate to 100 percent
- One full year of directly-related specialized experience equivalent to the GS-5 level. If ungraded hours exceed 10 percent, GPA cannot be used



Roles & Responsibilities

Financial Management Career Field Team (FM-CFT)

The Financial Management Career Field Team (FM-CFT) serves as the liaison between the AFPC Central Salary Account Office and the PAQ managers. The responsibilities of the FM-CFT include:

- Facilitates FY PAQ/SCEP MAJCOM requests and final DT approval
- Facilitates announcement/employee on-boarding process to fill PAQ intern positions
- Tracks career ladder promotions/quarterly evaluations/formal training
- Schedules PAQs to attend BFMOC/FMSOC/ PAQSOC
- Tracks and facilitates PAQ outplacement process
- Communicates with Supervisors of Record (SORs) to address and resolve documented PAQ performance issues

PAQ Manager (MAJCOM level)

The PAQ manager is usually the first person in the gaining organization with whom the PAQ intern communicates with upon selection to the program. The PAQ manager is responsible for:

- Managing the PAQ Intern Program for your respective organization
- Facilitating the PAQ intern placement in and out of the PAQ Program
- Initial orientation to the organization and overview of the PAQ Program
- Introductions to the SOR
- Serving as the liaison between the organization and the Air Force Financial Management PAQ Coordinator (FM-CFT)
- Identifying and clarifying responsibilities for the SOR, the Rotational Supervisor (RS), and the PAQ intern
- Training the SOR, the RS, and the PAQ intern to establish and enhance the PAQ Program for all concerned parties
- Providing advice, guidance, and leadership to the SOR, the RS, and the PAQ interns
- Managing the in-processing checklist ensuring you have the tools to succeed

PAQ Supervisor of Record (SOR)

The SOR has the primary responsibility of ensuring PAQ interns have access to and complete the required training. Newly appointed SORs must participate in supervisor orientation which broadly addresses training requests, counseling, performance evaluations, time and attendance, promotions, and outplacement. Supervisor orientation is conducted by the PAQ manager, and SORs will receive an invitation to attend.

Ideally, the PAQ intern will have one SOR throughout the internship period, regardless of rotational assignment. The SOR maintains managerial and administrative control over the PAQ intern and is the principal point of contact for the PAQ manager when dealing with issues concerning the PAQ intern. The SOR is responsible for:

- Developing performance plans and providing clear expectations for performance, training, and developmental objectives
- Providing mentoring, feedback, and guidance
- Monitoring training in coordination with established and approved training plans
- Documenting and addressing performance issues
- Annual performance evaluations, ideally in conjunction with the RS
- Initiating all request for personnel actions, such as promotions, reassignments, and outplacements through PAQ manager
- All administrative issues, such as travel, benefits, time and attendance, and training and experience requirements
- Communicating with the PAQ manager
- Communicating with each RS to ensure they understand their role and responsibility, providing a program overview, rotational assignment objectives, PAQ intern expectations, and evaluation responsibilities
- Completing quarterly performance evaluations
- Rating performance annually in accordance with AFI 36-100I in addition to quarterly performance evaluations

Roles & Responsibilities *cont.*

Rotational Supervisor (RS)

The RS meets training and experience objectives identified by the SOR. Working together with the SOR, the RS is responsible for:

- Identifying objectives to be accomplished during the rotational assignment
- Communicating the objectives to the PAQ intern prior to the beginning of the assignment
- Ensuring the PAQ intern is assigned a grade/position-appropriate full workload
- Assisting with management and administrative control, such as travel, time and attendance, leave and training requests, etc.
- Documenting and addressing performance issues during rotation
- Coordinating the quarterly performance evaluations with the SOR and providing those assessments to the SOR



The PAQ Program provides interns with great opportunities to network and give back to their local communities. Four PAQ interns and the rest of their BFMOC class donated over 80 pajamas and 200 batteries in Biloxi, MI.

PAQ Intern

The PAQ intern's responsibilities are to maximize training opportunities and job experiences while developing a career in the Air Force FM career field. Working with supervisors, both rotational and permanent, the intern is responsible for:

- Completion of required training identified in the applicable training plan
- Achieving goals and objectives identified for each rotational assignment
- Maintaining satisfactory performance
- Developing core FM competencies
- Developing mentoring relationships
- Working with supervisors and peers to enhance training with on-the-job experience

Training Plans

Training plans are designed to provide increasing levels of responsibility as PAQ interns progress through the training program. All interns should receive training to enable them to become competent, effective, and productive employees capable of successfully competing for future positions beyond the intern program.

The applicable training plan should be reviewed by both the SOR and the PAQ intern. A signed copy of the plan should be maintained by the SOR and the PAQ manager.

Helpful Downloads

- [PAQ 501 Cost Training Plan](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)
- [PAQ 560 Series Training Plan](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)
- [PAQ 501 Series Training Plan](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)
- [PAQ 1515 Series Training Plan](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)
- [PAQ 510 Series Training Plan](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)

Evaluations & Appraisals

Quarterly Evaluations/Appraisals provide regular opportunities for mentoring, providing feedback, addressing performance issues, and/or outlining corrective guidance, if necessary. The quarterly evaluation is signed by both the PAQ intern and the SOR, and a copy is provided to the PAQ manager, who in turn provides a copy to the FM-CFT. Example forms are provided here:

Helpful Downloads

- [Quarterly Intern Eval](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)
- [Quarterly Supervisor Eval](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)

Promotions

Promotions are based on meeting the time-in-grade requirement, satisfactory performance on the job, successful progress in the training plan, and a recommendation by the SOR.

The SOR initiates the promotion of the PAQ intern approximately 90 days prior to the promotion effective date. An e-mail notification from the SOR to the PAQ manager will suffice as notification. This 90-day requirement allows ample time to ensure the PAQ intern is promoted within the guidelines of the program, if recommended by the SOR.

The promotion requires the following in order to have the Request for Personnel Action (RPA) submitted to personnel initiating promotion action. All of this information is available from the PAQ manager.

- Position number
- AFSC
- PAS Code
- Duty Location
- Office symbol
- Core Document/Position Description
- Quarterly Evaluation
 - Employee
 - Supervisor

Once the promotion requirements have been met, the PAQ manager will submit the RPA to the local civilian personnel office. The local civilian personnel office will submit the action to AFPC no earlier than 30 days from the effective date of the action. The promotion results in a processed SF Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action, which is provided to the Human Resource Specialist Team and in turn provided to the employee, SOR, PAQ manager, and the FM-CFT.

In the event the PAQ intern is not recommended for promotion within the program guidelines, the SOR should provide notice of that decision to the PAQ intern and the PAQ manager no later than 120 days before the promotion is scheduled. AFI 36-602, Civilian Intern Programs outlines the process needed to facilitate withholding promotion from a PAQ.



Promotions at the PAQ Program are based on a number of criteria. PAQ interns are given feedback as part of the promotion process.

Probationary Period

The first year of employment serves as the PAQ intern's probationary period during which the supervisor closely monitors performance and conduct to determine if the PAQ intern should continue in the program. If poor job performance, scholastic deficiency, poor training progress, or conduct and discipline problems appear, the supervisor immediately contacts the PAQ manager and the FM-CFT. The PAQ intern will be provided counseling to help get them back on the right path. If counseling fails, then termination of Air Force employment may be necessary.

Rotational Assignments

All PAQ interns must complete one mandatory rotational assignment, with the goal of obtaining a different perspective and gaining breadth of knowledge. Additional rotations are granted at the supervisor's discretion. The rotation is recommended after the intern has completed the second year of the program since most of the first year of their assignment is spent completing formal training. The intern's SOR is responsible for initiating rotational assignments and determining the appropriate timing for rotations. The assignment will be a minimum of four months, with longer rotations set at the supervisor's discretion. During rotational assignments, interns will maintain the same SOR and job series. Assignments will be within the same geographic location except in situations where unit funding is available to pay for costs incurred during the rotation to another geographic location.



The rotational assignment is a prominent feature of the PAQ Program. Second year intern Norma Insurriaga spent her rotational assignment at the Pentagon.

Outplacement

Outplacement, or completion of the PAQ Intern Program, is based on meeting the time-in-grade requirement, satisfactory performance on the job, successful progress in the training plan, and a recommendation by the SOR.

Six months prior to graduation, the FM-CFT initiates the outplacement process of the PAQ intern. An e-mail notification is sent to the SOR and the RS notifying them of the upcoming outplacement and inquiring management's intentions for outplacement of the intern. The PAQ intern is also notified via email about the upcoming graduation date. Depending on management's response, the PAQ intern may be notified that their outplacement is within their current organization or MAJCOM. If no vacancies exist, the FM-CFT will contact all MAJCOM PAQ POCs to determine if current vacancies exist. If a vacancy exists the FM-CFT will work with the gaining installation to begin the outplacement process.

Outplacement Process when position is designated:

- Intern sign/dates formal FM-CFT outplacement job offer
- SOR sign/dates the FM PAQ graduation certificate
- FM-CFT notifies gaining installation to initiate the RPA for PAQ outplacement
- PAQ fills out all required documentation for PCS
- FM-CFT tracks RPA to make sure RPA processes and PAQ is removed from Central Salary Account Office (CSA)

In the event that no vacancy exists for outplacement by the graduation date, the PAQ can be extended up to six months on the CSA until an outplacement vacancy becomes available.

PAQ Graduation Extension Process:

- SOR sign/dates FM PAQ Graduation Extension Form
- FM-CFT team chief endorses extension request
- Extension request is sent to SAF/FM for approval
- Extension request is presented to AFPC/DPI for final approval

Helpful Downloads

- [Sample Outplacement Offer](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)
- [Sample PAQ Graduation Certification](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)
- [FM PAQ Graduation Extension Form](#) (*Microsoft Word link*)

DoD FM Certification Program

What does the DoD FM Certification Program mean to you?

When you graduate the PAQ Intern Program you will have to complete the DoD FM Certification Program requirement for your position and grade level. The DoD FM Certification Program aligns all positions to one of three professional certification levels and encompasses competency-based training and experience. The intern training plans have been developed with certification program requirements in mind, so you will likely have most of the requirements completed for your level and need only the corresponding years of experience.

Where can I find information on the DoD FM Certification Program?

FM Online: <https://fmonline.ousdc.osd.mil/>

FM Career Path

The FM career path you take is a personal choice based upon your career goals and objectives. Some people choose to focus on a more technical or specialized career path while others are interested in a more corporate- or leadership-focused career with greater breadth of experience.

Below is a link that takes you to the FM Force Development Primer. The Primer contains information to help you determine the career path you wish to pursue. Inside the Primer you will find a couple of roadmaps: one is the Civilian Force Development Roadmap, and the other is the Civilian Technical Force Development Roadmap.

The roadmaps outline similar education, training, and experiential expectations for career growth. The primary difference between the two is that the technical roadmap focuses on a career specializing in a field of technical expertise; the other outlines a greater breadth of experience. Work with your supervisor and mentor to determine the best path for you.

The link to the FM Primer is:

<https://cs3.eis.af.mil/sites/26786/FMPubs>

General Information

Regulatory Guidance:

Helpful Downloads

- Air Force Instruction 36-602 Civilian Intern Programs ([Adobe Acrobat link](#))

New Hire Information:

This page includes information on employee benefits, updating personnel records, viewing electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF), accomplishing training requirements, and making self-service updates. The information is an excellent way to introduce new employees to the myPers website as their first stop for personnel information.

Glossary of Terms

AFPC	Air Force Personnel Center
AFPC/DPI	AFPC Directorate of Civilian Force Integration
AFCS	Air Force Civilian Service
BFMOC	Basic Financial Management Officer Course
CSA	Central Salary Account Office
FM-CFT	Financial Management Career Field Team; responsible for the administration of the FM PAQ Program
FMSOC	Financial Management Staff Officer Course
MAJCOM	Major Command; each MAJCOM has a particular functional responsibility
PAQ Intern	Employee in the Palace Acquire Program
PAQ NCR Manager	Manager of the Palace Acquire Program for the National Capital Region
PAQSOC	Palace Acquire Staff Officer Course
PAS Code	Personal Accounting Symbol Code
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
RPA	Request for Personnel Action
RS	Rotational Supervisor; supervisor interns work with on a temporary basis while learning different aspects of the job
SCEP	Student Career Experience Program
SOR	Supervisor of Record; supervisor who the PAQ intern works for while in the training program